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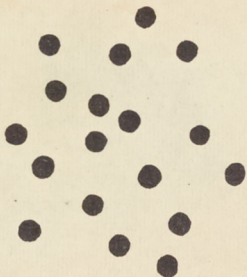
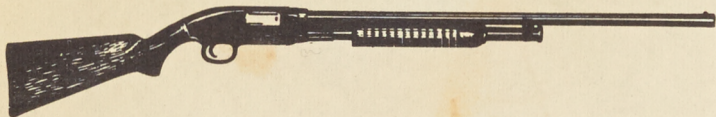
C·I·L

M

*Jim Madison*

# DUCK HUNTING HINTS





BLUE-WING TEAL



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# A<sup># 34664</sup>bout this booklet

This booklet is designed for the tyro, the newcomer, the beginner, the novice duck hunter. It is not for the experienced hunter! He *knows* how to hunt. He can only learn the various refinements of the art and he cannot learn them from literature . . . only from experience.

The newcomer needs an outline of the fundamentals of the sport. In time, as he gains in experience, he will pick up many tips that will further his success and enjoyment, but now, he needs guidance to get him on the right path to become a successful hunter.

The experienced duck hunter may disagree with some parts of this booklet, but will, we hope, be tolerant when he realizes its purpose . . . to help the beginner who earnestly desires to learn more about the art of duck hunting.

• Wildfowl illustrations by Peter Ward of  
Delta Waterfowl Research Station.





# Ways to Hunt

Due to its own characteristics, each area has ways of hunting that work better there than some other way. Here are the four most popular methods used across Canada.

## **JUMP SHOOTING**

This is popular across the country but particularly in the West on the prairies. Here, the hunter, if he is on foot, creeps up on small ponds and sloughs and shoots the birds as they rise. Ducks usually take off into the wind so the hunter should approach with the wind. When jump shooting from a boat, however, the reverse is often true. The boat can get closer to the sitting birds, so the hunter usually approaches upwind taking the birds as they fly straight away from the boat.

## **DECOY SHOOTING**

This is the most common way to shoot ducks in Eastern Canada. Set up a blind where birds feed, set out your decoys and wait for birds to show up.





### **PASS SHOOTING**

Select a point or ridge that the fowl cross in flying to and from feeding places. This route is called a flyway or line of flight; the birds may use it for a day or a week if the wind doesn't change. The hunter who can spot the flyway for that particular day is assured of a good shoot. Set the blind up right on the line of flight and take the birds as they pass overhead. This type of shooting is popular in Western Canada.

### **STUBBLE SHOOTING**

Practiced mainly in Western Canada where some ducks, such as Mallards and Pintails, feed in grain fields.

From a high point of land the flight line of ducks is observed until the feeding area is located. A visit to the field satisfies the hunter that the ducks are feeding there in quantity. The birds are not disturbed but allowed to leave by themselves, after which the hunter either takes advantage of natural cover or digs a well-concealed pit blind. He places his decoys, then waits until the next feeding period when he takes the birds coming in. Ducks generally feed twice a day; right after day break then from 4:00 p.m. on. Late in the season or during stormy weather the ducks may feed continuously with constant movement between field and water.

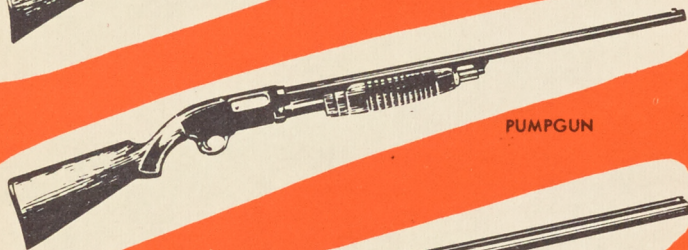
### **IMPORTANT**

No matter what way you hunt, when the ducks come in *Don't Move*. Ducks have sharp eyes and flare away because of strange movements more than any other reason.

# YOUR SHOTGUN AND YOU



AUTOLOADER



PUMPGUN



DOUBLE BARREL

YOU WILL SHOOT BEST WITH YOUR OWN SHOTGUN AND WHEN CHOOSING ONE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THINGS TO CONSIDER AND LOOK FOR.

## GAUGE

For waterfowl shooting, 12 and 16 ga. are the most popular. You want to throw as big a load as hard as possible and anything under 20 ga. just doesn't hold enough lead or powder to do the job.

### ACTION

Try to stick to guns which will take two or more shells at a loading. Some hunters find a long barrel with a choke device makes it easier to point out those high flyers and it can also be adapted to short or long range shooting.

### CHOKE

The novice is well advised to choose a gun with full or modified choke. If you pick a double-barrelled job . . . have one barrel *full* choke and the other *modified*. Some hunters like the adjustable choke devices which are available, while others will not hunt with a fellow using one due to the noise and blowback. Ask the men you hunt with. Also, remember . . . a choke device won't get ducks by itself . . . it's still up to you!

If you buy a second hand gun, buy from a reputable dealer. Inquire about its history, head space, strength of action, and availability of parts. *Do not buy a shotgun with a Damascus or twist barrel* unless you plan to pull the firing pin and put the gun over the mantle. These barrels will not withstand pressure developed by modern smokeless powder loads.

When buying a new shotgun, buy from an established dealer . . . that way you can be sure of a good buy. Test it for weight, smoothness of action, length, fit and ease of handling to be sure it is the gun for you.

*All C-I-L Shot Shells are primed with "Super-Clean" primers which will not rust or corrode the bore of your gun. It is wise, however, to wipe your gun over lightly where it has been handled as perspiration will corrode it. Remove all grit and moisture from the action. If you have been shooting in the cold wait until your gun warms up to room temperature before cleaning it, otherwise moisture may condense on it after it is put away and cause rusting.*



# Shot, Shell and Choke

.....

There are five classes of shot shells available in 12 gauge; standard load, heavy load, long range, special long range and magnum (*that's the 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" magnum we mean . . . not the three inch shell . . . that's something else altogether*).

Then there are two commonly accepted chokes for duck hunting . . . full choke and modified.

Recommended shot sizes for ducks are 4, 5 and 6.

This means there are thirty combinations of shot, shell and choke that might . . . just might be used for ducks.

What is the solution? Actually there is no single solution as there are many factors that will influence the combination you use — wind, type of shooting, (decoy, pass, jump, stubble) or time of season (early or late), how much the birds have been shot at and your own personal shooting habits. That's why it is impossible to arrive at one perfect combination for everyone. One thing you can do is separate your shooting into four categories: pass, jump, decoy and stubble shooting.

## **PASS SHOOTING**

Calls for the same gun and loads early or late in the season. The birds will be way up there as a rule, so you'll want long range loads, a long smooth swinging barrel with a full choke and heavy shot . . . about No. 4. The idea is to throw out a good hard-hitting pattern for clean kills and fewer cripples.

## **JUMP SHOOTING**

If you are hunting from the shore, you will want the same combination as above because those birds will

get up and go before too long if they hear you tramping through the reeds. On water you can often get quite close; then No. 4, 5 or 6 shot and a modified choke will do a clean job.

#### **DECOY SHOOTING**

As a newcomer it is better to go out overgunned, overarmed and over-powered . . . with killing power, that is. Leave the fancy angles such as small shot and smallbore guns to the boys who can be sure of bringing their birds within 25 yards. Because you want to pack plenty of power and pattern, better use 12 or 16 gauge, modified or full choke and heavy loads in 4, 5, or 6.

#### **STUBBLE SHOOTING**

If the birds are coming in well, then the same loads as decoy shooting calls for, are advised. If the birds stay way up, then follow the pass shooting recommendations.

As you become more proficient then you will select your own favorite combination but the above hints will serve as starters and you can easily work on from there.

One idea that will never hurt is for you to pattern your gun, because all guns do not handle all shot sizes equally well. Fire several shells from each 4, 5 and 6 load and check the patterns. You may find that standard 5's are good but long range 4's are better in your particular gun. If this is so . . . use the one that gives you the best pattern at the range you will be shooting. Remember, however, you can't pattern your gun with one shot . . . shoot four or five shells from each 4, 5 or 6 load to determine the best one for your own gun.

Patterning will show whether you tend to shoot high, low, right or left, as well as how your gun handles various shot sizes. It will also show you very clearly that a shotgun is no more than a 50 yard weapon.

# Know your ducks

There are over 60 species of ducks and geese in North America, so it is no wonder sportsmen become confused at times. It's a good idea to learn to recognize the species as some are protected game in certain areas and others aren't even edible.

Ducks are more or less split into two groups . . . *diving ducks*, or deep water ducks which are found around coasts and larger bodies of water and *puddle ducks* . . . also called surface feeders, puddlers, dabblers, tip-ups, and paddlers.

There are various ways of distinguishing to which group a duck belongs. For example, puddle ducks leap straight up into the air when taking off while divers skim along the surface to get air-borne. Another difference is in the hind toe of these two groups. The divers have a broad lobe which acts as a rudder. The difference can be seen in the accompanying illustrations.

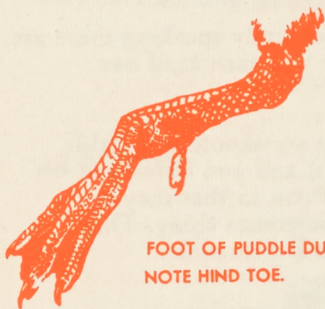
Learn to identify the birds on the wing for this way you will often avoid taking game you do not want. Watch the way they fly . . . wing movement, body position and flight formation. Listen to the noise they make . . . the way they talk and the whistle from their wings. Watch them land, swim and feed. Observe and listen . . . it takes time but is worth it and a lot of fun.

One of the best and quickest ways to learn about the birds in your area is to go out with an



experienced hunter . . . one who really knows his ducks. He will point out the quirks and mannerisms that help him tag each species, and tell you what to watch for. Nothing can take the place of experience.

It will help if you get hold of one of the numerous good bird books available. A copy of the "Waterfowl Hunters' Guide" is obtainable free of charge, by writing to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ontario.



FOOT OF PUDDLE DUCK.  
NOTE HIND TOE.



TAKE-OFF OF  
PUDDLE DUCK

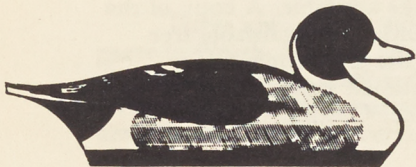


FOOT OF DIVER



TAKE-OFF OF DIVER

# Decoys . . . and Decoying



## DECOYS

Generally speaking there are four kinds of decoys in the market and each kind has its advantages and disadvantages.

### RUBBER

Light and compact . . . ideal if you are shooting in fields (as is done extensively in the West) and you have to carry a large number a long way. Poor, in that they are often bad imitations and are sometimes shiny. They are easily punctured by shot and will then sink.

### PAPIER MACHE

Light and inexpensive but rot if water gets into them. Easily punctured and won't take rough handling.

### WOOD OR CORK

Heavy and most expensive but give best use and results. Usually most realistic looking of all and can be easily worked on to improve them.

### SILHOUETTE

Made of wood or metal and designed for use in land shooting in grain fields.

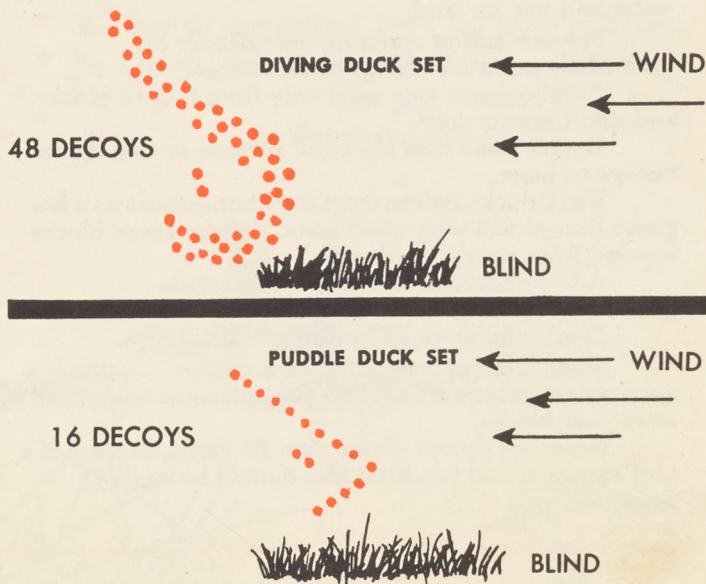
Pick the most lifelike decoys of the species you want to shoot. Repair or discard any that won't float naturally. Be sure your decoys have a flat, dull finish. Ducks just don't shine.

## DECOYING

As mentioned before, there are two kinds or classes of ducks; divers and puddle ducks. They decoy in different ways. The divers will usually pass over the decoys before landing while the puddle ducks either pitch right into the middle or land outside and swim in.

All ducks land and take off into the wind if they can. The diving ducks run along the surface to get off while the puddle ducks jump straight up into the air.

These things must be taken into consideration when putting out decoys. If it's divers you're hunting, remember they overshoot and set your blocks downwind from your blind. For puddle ducks, set the decoys so they have landing room right in front of the blind.





Two time-tested sets are the "V" with the opening downwind and the point in front of the blind for puddle ducks, and the "pipe" or "hook" which is suitable for large sets of diver ducks. These sets are illustrated on the previous page.

All this is of course of no interest to the shooter in the prairies who is shooting in the grain fields or "stubble shooting" as it is called. Here the decoys are spread out as though feeding and the ducks shot as they pass over or come in to land. Some hunters simply lay out pieces of cloth cut roughly in the silhouette of a duck as seen from the air. Some use pieces of tar paper. It should be noted that decoys for land shooting and those for shooting on water are different due to the difference in stance of a duck on water and one on land.

For the hunter shooting over decoys on water, here are a few things to remember:

Puddle ducks may need only from 6 to 18 blocks and don't crowd them.

Divers come into big close spreads or two dozen decoys or more.

Black ducks are the most wary but sometimes a few goose decoys will allay their fears. Set the goose blocks upwind from your spread.

A few decoys in the reeds add realism . . . quell fears.

Don't mix diver and puddle duck decoys.

Some hunters make their own decoys . . . this is a good way to get the satisfaction you will come to demand from your blocks.

Never set decoys closer than 20 yards, because if a bird sneaks in and you blast him there'll be mighty little meat left.

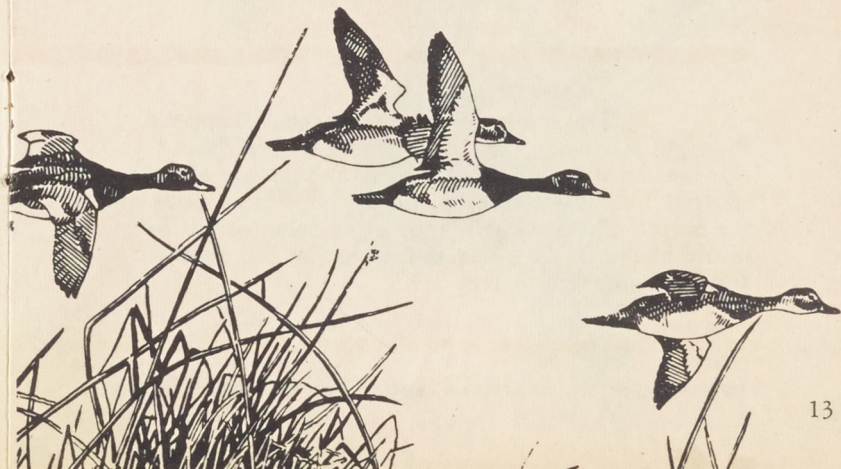
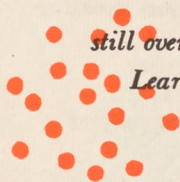
*Important:*

**CHECK YOUR LOCAL GAME LAWS AS TO THE USE, TYPE, NUMBER AND LOCATION OF DECOYS.**

# Know the range...

*How many times are ducks missed  
because some nimrod cuts loose when they're  
still over the next county? Don't you be the guilty one.*

*Learn to estimate the range. Practice will do the  
most good, but here are a  
few tips that will help.*





Compare the ducks to your decoys. Are they the same size? If you've set your blocks close enough to the blind, then the ducks are in range.

Try not to shoot until you can distinguish the birds' colours. They will not have the same colour as in the spring at mating time, but if you can distinguish white from brown or grey on the birds, then you can be pretty sure the ducks are in good shooting range.

Have a marker at 40 yards from the spot you are shooting from. Either set a decoy at that range or note a tree or rock or some similar marker in good range and judge the birds by that.

Shooting in range results in clean kills or clean misses . . . the aim of any true duck hunter.

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The ducks on the next page will appear the right size when seen along a gun barrel. Place this booklet on the floor and place the muzzle of your shotgun on the page below the duck selected. Look along the barrel. The duck will appear the same size as he would at the yardage selected. Compare the relative size with your gun barrel.

FOR HARD-HITTING PATTERNS, SHOOT THE "IMPERIAL" MAGNUM





20



30



60



40



12 yds.

# IMPERIAL

**SPECIAL LONG RANGE**

*"The King of Shot Shells"*



Designed for the sportsman who demands the utmost in performance, the "Imperial" offers more proven features than any other shot shell. For high, fast flying ducks and geese, they have the speed, power and punch to make clean kills at long ranges.



**IMPERIAL**  
**MAGNUM**

With 20% more shot than the "Imperial" Special Long Range, this 2 3/4" shot shell puts your gun in the powerful magnum class.



# MAXUM

## LONG



## RANGE

Second only to the "Imperial" this shell combines power, long range and dependable performance, Ideal for ducks and geese, the "Maxum" reaches out and gets them.

# CANUCK

## Standard and Heavy Loads

Canada's time-honoured, general purpose shot shell. Available in many gauges, the Standard Load is ideal for upland game, small game and pests while the Heavy Load in 12 gauge is excellent for waterfowl.





# Leading...



## OR FORWARD ALLOWANCE

Leading (pronounced **LEEDING**) is one phase of wildfowl shooting that is hard at first to understand and harder still to apply. What it means is this:

When shooting at moving game, particularly birds, with a shotgun, it is necessary to shoot ahead of the bird so the shot charge and the bird will meet. Shot requires an appreciable time to travel to the target and in that time the target may have moved anywhere up to 15 or 20 feet.

There are so many factors that influence the lead you take on a moving target that it is not practical to set up a table of distances to lead. The speed and angle of the target, the distance of hunter to target, shooting conditions in general and the hunter's reflexes all affect the type of shot to be taken and the lead to allow.

Speeds of ducks in flight will vary owing to wind velocity and direction, angle of flight in relation to the earth, age and physical state of bird, plumage and the will for speed at that moment. For these reasons, any chart showing the speeds would be misleading.

Suffice it to say that ducks in flight travel at speeds from 50 to 100 feet per second.

There are three generally accepted ways to lead but before concentrating on these, there are two ideas the novice should hold onto.

When shooting at a moving target, swing your gun along the line of flight of the target. Also, you can never hit your target if you shoot behind it, but you have a chance if you shoot well ahead of it; so, concentrate on getting your shot off ahead of the target.

The three methods of leading are as follows:

#### **SNAPSHOT OR SPOTSHOT**

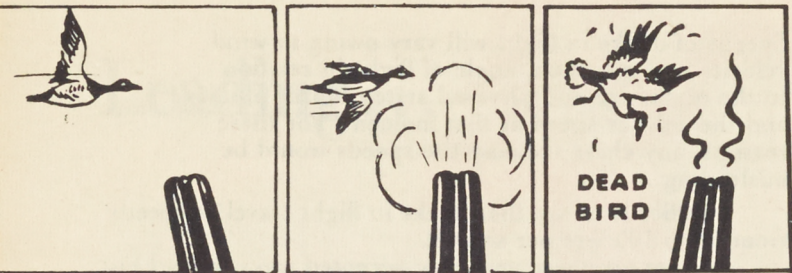
Here the hunter shoots ahead of the target at the spot where he hopes the charge and target will meet. He does not swing his gun. This is the fastest way to get a shot off but is only good when there is very little angle. With expert hunters this is a



*desperation shot and not recommended for good duck shooting.*

#### **POINTING OUT, OR SUSTAINED LEAD**

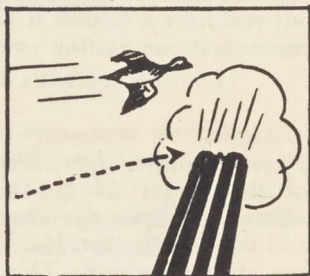
With this method the gunner picks up the bird and leads ahead what he considers the right distance, maintaining that lead just long enough to satisfy himself that his gun



is moving at the same speed as the target. He fires with the gun still swinging . . . in other words, he follows through.

### SWINGING PAST

In the swinging past method, the hunter starts the muzzle of his gun behind the target, swings the gun faster than the target is moving and fires when the muzzle is what he considers the right distance ahead of the target. The muzzle still moves faster than the target.



As one can see it is practice that will do the most good here. Trap and Skeet shooting provide good off-season practice to get in shape. Have an experienced hunter help you.

Lack of proper lead causes more people to miss than any other reason. If you feel that everything you do is correct and yet you still miss regularly, then look to your leading. If you miss the first shot . . . try doubling your lead.



# Blinds...

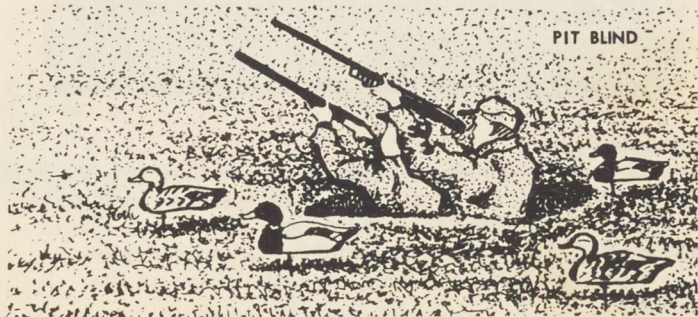
A blind should do at least three things:

- 1) *Blend with the surroundings or look natural if in the open*
- 2) *Provide freedom for shooting.*
- 3) *Conceal the hunter(s).*

It would be impossible to list all the types of blinds that hunters use because so much depends on the area and cover that a hunter will often improvise on the spot. Another thing is the kind of duck being hunted. For example . . . bluebills, whistlers and redheads can be shot from some awful monstrosities while black ducks require very carefully constructed blinds which do not show up on the landscape.

## **PIT BLINDS**

Used mostly in the West where ducks are feeding in fields. Dig a pit deep enough for concealment when sitting, but, with sufficient room to shoot from. Carry the earth away and spread the rim of the pit with grass or



reeds. Two things to remember here . . . *get permission to shoot and to dig pit if property is private and fill in the pit when finished.* To keep warm in a cold blind select a wooden box strong enough to sit on and large enough to hold a kerosene lantern. Bore some holes in one end, light the lantern and put it inside. Hand warmers are an asset too.

#### **SHORE BLINDS**

Some hunters build permanent blinds complete with seats and stoves. More often the hunter constructs a blind from the materials at hand. This proves easy if a roll of chicken wire is carried and reeds or brush are woven into it beforehand.

BLIND ON POT HOLE



#### **FLOATING BLINDS**

come in many varieties. There are those that provide concealment in the form of reeds or branches fixed to supports. The blind is anchored and the decoys spread around it. Then, there are scull boats and sneak boats in which the hunter "sculls" or drifts down on the ducks.



One thing hunters often overlook is the fact that their passage through reeds or brush may leave a beaten path which will warn ducks. Be sure to cover all such paths and be sure the boat is well covered. Don't leave a "warning flag" out for the ducks.







# Duck Boats

There are quite a few boats that are excellent for duck hunting and your final choice will be influenced by the type of hunting you do and the size of the body of water on which you hunt. A few points to help you choose the right one are:

- Be sure to pick a good stable boat that won't throw you if a couple of heavy loads are fired from one side.
- Hunters usually want a boat that is light enough to be easily carried down to water or on a car top.
- A boat that draws little water will make travel in weeds easier.
- If you travel open water, pick the boat that gets you there and back . . . regardless of the weather!
- Paint it the same colour as the background in which it will be concealed.
- Don't overload it or distribute the weight unevenly. Safety first *always*.

# Clothes for the Hunter...

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Always  
take  
extra  
clothing!



Be sure your clothes blend with the background as ducks can see very well and although it is usually movement and not colour that alarms them, inconspicuous clothes will make your movements less apparent.

"Warmth without weight" is a good slogan to adopt and you might add "without bulkiness". You should be able to move freely so as not to hinder your gun swing.

A cap that shades your face is a help and it will be especially appreciated if it keeps the rain and snow off your neck.

A face peering up into the sky is a sure sign to a duck that all is not well. A trick the oldtimers often used was to grow a good stubble of whiskers to cover their faces — but perhaps a check with the wife here is advisable!

Hip or thigh length rubber boots or chest waders are a great help if you are hunting over water and don't have a dog, but remember, they can be very uncomfortable if you have a long way to walk.

A pair of binoculars will be a help in locating ducks especially on the prairies.





# BE A TRUE HUNTER

## THE TRUE HUNTER IS A GENTLEMAN AND A CONSERVATIONIST

Don't litter blinds, property and waterways  
with spent shells and refuse.

•

Don't spoil the next man's shooting  
by blasting ducks out of range.

•

Don't set too close to another man's blind.  
Check local game laws as to regulations concerning  
blinds, outboard motors and decoys.

•

Don't pick up ducks unless flight is over or current  
makes it necessary or downed birds are crippled.

•

Don't stand up and spoil the shoot for others  
if ducks aren't coming your way.

•

Obey the law! Also, obey the local or club "ground rules".

•

Be in position early . . . don't spoil the shoot by mucking about

•

Get permission to cross property and  
respect it as your own.

•

Use a dog to retrieve cripples wherever possible.



## HUNTING CROWS IS YEAR-ROUND SPORT

Crows are clever and cunning—they are worthy of your fieldcraft and shooting skill. The new C-I-L booklet—"Crow Hunting Hints"—is full of facts about the crow's habits, contains useful hints about all aspects of crow hunting.

Hunting crows helps you keep your eye 'in' all year—your shooting will be sharper when the season opens for ducks and other game birds!

For your **FREE BOOKLET** on Crow Hunting, write to Canadian Industries Limited, Ammunition Advertising Dept., P.O. Box 10, Montreal.

# **TEN COMMANDMENTS**

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## **OF SAFETY**

- 1. Treat every gun with the respect due a loaded gun.** This is the first rule of gun safety.
- 2. Guns carried into camp or home, or when otherwise not in use, must always be unloaded,** and taken down or have actions open; guns always should be carried in cases to the shooting area.
- 3. Always be sure barrel and action are clear of obstructions,** and that you have only ammunition of the proper size for the gun you are carrying. Remove oil and grease from chamber before firing.
- 4. Always carry your gun so that you can control the direction of the muzzle, even if you stumble;** keep the safety on until you are ready to shoot.
- 5. Be sure of your target before you pull the trigger;** know the identifying features of the game you intend to hunt.
- 6. Never point a gun at anything you do not want to shoot;** avoid all horseplay while handling a gun.
- 7. Unattended guns should be unloaded;** guns and ammunition should be stored separately beyond reach of children and careless adults.
- 8. Never climb a tree or fence or jump a ditch with a loaded gun;** never pull a gun toward you by the muzzle.
- 9. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or the surface of water;** when at target practice, be sure your backstop is adequate.
- 10. Avoid alcoholic drinks** before or during shooting.





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